

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SIG-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03 MCT-01 /068 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 077596

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, LE, EG, SY, PLO

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN PRESS ATTACKS ON ASSAD

REF: DAMASCUS 1667

1. EVEN PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF REFTEL, WE HAD BEEN NOTING
EGYPTIAN PRESS ATTACKS ON SYRIA FOR ITS ROLE IN STANDING
ALOOF FROM THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON. NOW THAT SYRIA HAS
AGREED--IN THE FORM OF AN ADF COMMUNIQUE--TO STOP THE
MOVEMENT OF REINFORCEMENTS AND EQUIPMENT INTO LEBANON
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(BEIRUT 1617), THE BROADSIDES FROM THE REJECTIONIST STATES
WILL PROBABLY INTENSIFY.

2. THE FACT REMAINS THAT RECENT SYRIAN BEHAVIOR HAS BEEN
RESTRAINED, IN STAYING OUT OF THE FIGHTING,
IN SUPPORTING LEBANON IN EFFORTS TO AVOID NON-CONDEMNATORY
LANGUAGE IN THE SC RESOLUTION IN GIVING SUPPORT TO A

SINGLE RESOLUTION, AND NOW IN MOVING TO STOP IRAQI REINFORCEMENTS. EQUALLY IMPORTANT, WE WILL NEED SYRIAN ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION IN OTHER IMPORTANT WAYS AS UNIFIL EXERCISES ITS MANDATE AND AS MOVES ARE MADE TO INTRODUCE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL, THEREFORE, IF THE EGYPTIANS COULD BE PREVAILED UPON TO STOP OR EASE OFF ON PRESS ATTACKS ON SYRIA OVER SYRIAN ACTIONS IN THE LEBANESE SITUATION.

3. CONSIDERING EGYPTIAN SENSITIVITIES ABOUT SYRIA AND SYRIA'S CONTINUING PROPAGANDA BARRAGE AGAINST THE SADAT INITIATIVE, IT WILL PROBABLY BE DIFFICULT TO TURN THE EGYPTIANS AROUND. WE LEAVE TO YOU HOW AN APPROACH TO THE EGYPTIANS MIGHT BE MADE, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THREE POINTS IN YOUR PRESENTATION MIGHT USEFULLY BE INCLUDED: (A) WE BELIEVE THE WEAK LEBANESE GOVERNMENT MUST BE GIVEN ALL APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE IN THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD, AND THIS SHOULD INCLUDE ACTIONS--WHICH ONLY SYRIA CAN CARRY OUT--TO PREVENT REINFORCEMENTS FROM COMING INTO THE COUNTRY; (B) WE FIND IT IRONIC THAT THE EGYPTIAN PRESS IS TAKING A LINE PARALLEL TO THE LIBYANS AND IRAQIS IN THIS ISSUE; AND (C) WE APPRECIATE THE FIRM EGYPTIAN SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT EMBODIED IN THE SC RESOLUTION, BUT WE ALSO NEED ACTIVE SYRIAN COOPERATION IN MAKING THE CONCEPT WORK SUCCESSFULLY, COOPERATION WHICH THE SYRIANS

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WILL BE LESS DISPOSED TO OFFER IF THEY ARE CRITICIZED BY THE MODERATE STATES AS WELL AS BY THE REJECTIONISTS AND RADICALS. VANCE

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